

Message Text

SECRET

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43

ACTION EUR-12

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SECDEF

S E C R E T LONDON 00181

DEFENSE FOR ISA

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MARR, UK' EQ

SUBJ: PHOENIX ISLANDS AGREEMENT

REF: LONDON 16625

1. BULLOCK, HEAD OF PACIFIC DEPENDENT TERRITORIES DEPARTMENT, FCO, HAS WRITTEN, IN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF OUR 29 OCTOBER LETTER, TO SAY THAT THE FCO FEELS IT WOULD BE ADVANTAGEOUS FOR ALL CONCERNED "TO HAVE A FORMAL AGREEMENT" SINCE ALTHOUGH THE PHOENIX ISLANDS FACILITY IS BEING REDUCED TO A CARETAKER STATION, "IT IS THE USAF'S INTENTION TO MAINTAIN THE FACILITY IN SUCH A WAY AS TO PERMIT RESUMPTION OF MISSILE TESTING IN THE FUTURE". BULLOCK NOTES THAT THE GILBERT ISLANDS GOVERNMENT -- AFTER INDEPENDENCE IN ABOUT 1978 -- MIGHT WELL SEE "DIFFICULTIES IN TAKING OVER AT INDEPENDENCE COMMITMENTS OF AN INFORMAL NATURE". THE GOVERNOR OF THE GILBERTS IS RETURNING TO TARAWA VIA WASHINGTON AND WILL BE IN WASHINGTON ON 19 JANUARY. BULLOCK FEELS THAT IT WOULD BE BEST IF THE PROBLEMS OVER THE AGREEMENT AND THE CONTINUED USE OF THE ISLANDS (INCLUDING THE EXCHANGE OF NOTES OF 6 APRIL 1939) COULD BE DISCUSSED "INFORMALLY BETWEEN THOSE WHO KNOW WHAT THE THREE GOVERNMENTS INVOLVED WANT FROM THE ISLANDS". HE SUGGESTS, THEREFORE, AN INFORMAL DISCUSSION WITH STATE AND DOD OFFICIALS SHOULD BE ARRANGED FOR THE 19TH OF JANUARY. BULLOCK IN-

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FORMS US THAT THE BRITISH EMBASSY WILL BE TAKING THIS

MATTER UP TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS DIRECTLY.

RICHARDSON

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NNN

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